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# Cultural ties between Vietnam and Denmark strengthened



New Cultural Development and

Exchange initiative for 2011-2015 between Vietnam and Denmark approved.

The Cultural Development and Exchange Fund (CDEF) for the 2011 - 2015 period made its debut on February 25, 2011 with a total budget of 6,575,500 Danish krone (US\$1.2 million). The CDEF provides support for contemporary artists and cultural performances in Vietnam and for cultural exchange activities between Denmark and Vietnam, thus fostering mutual understanding.

The CDEF is managed by the Danish Embassy in Hanoi. The aims of the cultural exchange are to present Danish culture in Vietnam for the purpose of enhancing and inspiring Vietnam's arts and culture through development of partnerships between Danish and Vietnamese artists, and to stimulate mutual inspiration and exchange of experiences between artists from both countries. It also presents Vietnamese culture to the Danish public for inspiration, enrichment and understanding and enhancing dialogue and tolerance through performances by Vietnamese artists in Denmark, alone or with Danish participation. The fund will also support events, exhibitions, performances and festivals in Vietnam, with an art development perspective by Vietnamese artists alone or with Danish participation, and organise an annual talent prize for Vietnamese young artists. This can help support events and festivals in Vietnam, arts prizes and/or "Thematic years" in which artists will be supported to interpret and express a particular cultural theme.

In the last five years (2006 - 2010), the CDEF sponsored over 50 events, modern cultural projects in Vietnam in many fields such as music, theatre and visual arts. Besides, the fund often holds talent contests for young artists in painting, modern dancing, plot music and performing arts. Typical projects included Dai Lam Linh Music, Painting Talent Contest 2010, Emergency Theatre Exhibition, and Contemporary Dancing Talent Contest 2007.

In the coming five years (2011 - 2015), the CDEF will include support for Vietnamese contemporary cultural or artistic activities, organize art competitions for talented young Vietnamese artists, and organise cultural exchange activities between Denmark and Vietnam. Besides, the fund will enhance networking and collaboration between Danish and Vietnamese artists and promoting of mutual understanding between the people of the two countries. Main activities will include supporting contemporary cultural or artistic activities, organise biennial talent contests for young artists, and organise cultural exchanges.

The fund will also open the door to traditional projects with contemporary inspiration, or other artistic fields combined with contemporary art. Danish Ambassador to Vietnam John Nielsen is the chairman of the CDEF 2011 – 2015; and Ms Ngo Phuong Lan, Deputy Director of International Relations Department under the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism, is the vice chair of the fund. The executive board for the fund consists of three Vietnamese members, namely artist Dinh Quang Tinh, music composer Kim Ngoc, and cultural journalist Uyen Ly. The four Danish members of the board are Jens Keare Rasmusen, Director of Danish Centre for Cultural Development; Soren Krogh, Head of Projects Division under the Danish Arts Agency; consultant Trine Glue Doan; and film director Eric Clausen. The presence of Vietnamese American artist Dinh Quang Tinh, who is now living in Ho Chi Minh City, in the executive board will help facilitate the linkage of the fund with the south of Vietnam.

Ambassador John Nielsen said, "Support for culture is an important part of our cooperation with Vietnam. We look forward to extending the already good relations between Vietnamese and Danish artists in the future and our hope is that the funds will be able to support the creativity of artists in Vietnam, as well as between Danish and Vietnamese artists. In this new phase, applicants of all ages will also have the possibility of sending proposals in either Vietnamese or English, which is an initiative of the fund to reach out to more artists in Vietnam.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Vietnam - Denmark diplomatic relations. The Danish Embassy is planning quite a number of cultural activities and the fund will be used to further strengthen cultural ties between our two countries. Ambassador John Nielsen said: "We hope that through this CDEF, cultural cooperation between Vietnam and Denmark will grow further to reach a new high."

Article by Thanh Thao in the Vietnam Business Forum

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